

# THE BEGINNING



Prepared by Mary Briggs, Historian, May 13, 2003

**Excerpts from an Article in the July/August 2000 Issue of the Interact**  
**By Donna Lynch**  
**Communications Chair**

While Governor Dan Evans did appoint the first committee in October of 1970, the roots of this organization go back even further. Let's start at the very beginning.

**1963**

Judge Evangeline Starr made a presentation in June of 1963 on the legal rights of women. The presentation was made in Yakima to the Governor's Commission on the Status of Women. Her report first talked about what was equal for men and women. Included were things like holding public office, owning and controlling separate property, pursuing a vocation/profession.

The second part of her report covered laws that were unequal between men and women. For example:

A woman could serve on a jury, but it was not required and she could claim an exemption. A wife could not transfer stocks without her husband's signature. A married woman could not sue for personal injuries unless her husband was a party in the suit. Men could marry at age 21, while women could enter into the contract at age 18. Once married, the woman was of legal age.

Regarding employment, wage discrimination due to sex was prohibited. It was a misdemeanor, and the penalty was no more than 90 days in prison or a fine of not more than \$250. Female employees who were discriminated against were entitled to recover in a civil action.

The next meeting of the Governor's Commission on the Status of Women was held September 1963 in Spokane.

From the agenda, items of discussion included:

- Employment Policies and Practices
- Federal Social Security and Tax Laws, Labor Laws and Legal Rights
- The Family and the Employed Woman
- Expanded Programs for the Employed Woman and Education.
- Daycare Program for Children of Working Mothers
- In-Service Training Courses

Also in 1963, Governor Albert Rosellini went on record urging all attendees at the National Governors' Conference to establish their own State Commission on the Status of Women.

Resolution submitted by  
Governor Albert D. Rosellini  
State of Washington  
1963 Nation Governor's Conference  
Miami Beach, Florida

## STATUS OF WOMEN

WHEREAS, Every State and the Chief Executive thereof, has a vital interest in the well-being of each and every citizen; and

WHEREAS, Each of us believes in the right of all citizens to use their talents to make their full contribution to society; and

WHEREAS, President Kennedy's Commission on the Status of Women has demonstrated the need for consideration of the question of equal opportunities for women in the United States in their preliminary meetings and written reports; and

WHEREAS, Several states have established Governor's Commissions on the Status of Women;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That this National Conference of Governors go on record as urging each individual Governor to promptly establish a State Commission on the Status of Women to survey and ascertain any areas of actual discrimination by law; outmoded customs; practices or inequities that hamper women simply because they are women, in fulfilling their duty as full partners and their moral obligation as citizens; and

BE IF FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Governors of each State provide the necessary leadership to the State Legislatures to act promptly to remove all legal inequities and to further provide leadership to private industry and business by eradicating in State government any discriminatory employment and personnel policies that might relate to women.

## **EXECUTIVE ORDER 06-13-63**

### **ORDER PERTAINING TO FAIR PRACTICES BY STATE AGENCIES PREAMBLE**

Our spiritual heritage proclaims, the supreme worth of the individual and the equality of opportunity for each individual to pursue self realization. The legislature has found and declared that practices of discrimination against any of its inhabitants because of race, creed, color, national origin, sex or age are a matter of state concern, that such discrimination threatens not only the rights and proper privileges of its inhabitants but menaces the institutions and foundation of a free democratic state.

In pursuit of this state's basic policy against discrimination and pursuant to the executive authority vested in the governor by the constitution of this state, I hereby proclaim the following executive order:

#### **ARTICLE I -- APPOINTMENT, ASSIGNMENT AND PROMOTION OF STATE PERSONNEL**

State officials and supervisory employees shall appoint, assign and promote state personnel on the basis of merit and fitness, without regard to race, color, creed, national origin, sex or age. State agencies shall bar from all employment application forms expressing any inquiry, expressing any limitation or specification as to race, color, creed, national origin, sex or age, unless it relates to a bona fide occupational qualification.

#### **ARTICLE II -- STATE ACTION**

In performing their service to the public, the agencies of the state shall not discriminate because of race, color, creed, national origin, sex or age, nor shall they authorize the use of state facilities in furtherance of discriminatory practices.

#### **ARTICLE III -- PUBLIC CONTRACTS**

Every state Contract for public works or for goods or services shall contain clauses barring discrimination on account of race, creed, color, national origin, sex or age by the person or persons contracting with the state.

#### **ARTICLE IV -- STATE EMPLOYMENT SERVICES**

Any state agency engaged in the employment referral and placement services for private industry or public agencies shall fill all job orders on a non-discriminatory basis, and shall decline any job order carrying a specification or limitation as to race, creed, color, national origin, sex or age, unless it relates to a bona fide occupational qualification . Information concerning employers believed to engage in discriminatory practices shall be referred by state agencies to the Washington State Board Against Discrimination.

## ARTICLE V -- TRAINING FOR JOB OPPORTUNITIES

All vocational and educational guidance counseling programs in all apprenticeships and on-the-job training programs of the state shall be conducted to encourage the fullest development of aptitude without regard to race, creed, color, national origin, sex or age.

## ARTICLE VI -- STATE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

In granting state financial assistance, state agencies shall be vigilant to further the state's policy of non-discrimination.

## ARTICLE VII -- STATE FORMS

All state agencies shall avoid in forms or request for information any item or inquiry expressing any limitation or specification as to race, color, creed, national origin, sex or age, unless the item or inquiry is expressly required by law or is required in good faith for a nondiscriminatory purpose and prior notification of its use has been given by the agency to the State Board Against Discrimination.

## ARTICLE VIII -- STATE LICENSING AND REGULATORY AGENCIES

Where a respondent in a proceeding before the State Board Against Discrimination is subject to the licensing or regulatory power of another state agency, the State Board Against Discrimination shall notify the state agency of the pendency of such proceeding. If, thereafter, the respondent is found by the State Board Against Discrimination, after notice of an opportunity to be heard, to have engaged in a discriminatory practice, the state agency shall be so notified and shall take action consistent with the exercise of its licensing or regulatory power.

## ARTICLE IX -- COOPERATION WITH THE STATE BOARD AGAINST DISCRIMINATION

All state agencies, in accordance with the provisions and intent of this state's law against discrimination shall cooperate fully with the State Board Against Discrimination and duly comply with its requests and recommendations for effectuating the state's policy against discrimination.

## ARTICLE X -- CONDUCT BY THE STATE'S REPRESENTATIVES

State officials and employees shall be ever mindful of the democratic heritage of the state which abhors any discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, national origin, sex or age, and shall take all necessary steps to effectuate the provisions and intent of this executive order.

ARTICLE XI -- PUBLICATION OF EXECUTIVE ORDER

Copies of this executive order shall be distributed to all state officials and copies shall be posted in conspicuous locations in all state facilities.

Albert D. Rosellini  
Governor

Attest:

Secretary of State

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***Letter from Mildred Dunn, Chairman of the Governor's Commission on the Status of Women to Governor Rosellini dated December 31, 1963***

Dear Governor Rosellini:

The Commission on the Status of Women wishes to commend you not only for your foresight in establishing the second state commission in the nation on February 20, 1963; but for your two executive orders during 1963 dealing with discrimination. The first one issued on February 20<sup>th</sup> to the State Personnel Board asked for a review of regulations to assure appointments and promotions in state employment without distinction to sex. The second, issued in June, covered any discrimination against race, religion, color, age or sex and affected all persons doing business with the state whether under bid or contract. Your actions provided the leadership needed in our state to help bring about equality for not only women but for all our citizens.

The Commission also wishes to commend the 1963 Legislature which took action in repealing the 1890 law which made it illegal for women to hold public office. With two U.S. Congresswomen and many other elected women officials throughout our state it was distressing to learn that this outdated law was still on our statute books.

Twenty-nine men and women business and community leaders were appointed by you to the Commission representing various sections of the state. Many other interested citizens were added as Committee members in order to seek knowledge and experience to facilitate the completion of our first report by December 31, 1963, as requested by you. Inasmuch as we have been a Governor's advisory commission, we have not had an operational budget. All the work has been carried on through volunteer efforts of each Commission and/or Committee member. This volunteer effort not only involved considerable time but also the travel and personal expenses of each member in attending the twelve statewide meetings

You charged the Commission with the responsibility of reviewing the current status of women in our state—legal, social, economic and political. In order to accomplish this and provide information for our report, public meetings were held in Bellingham, Yakima, Spokane, Vancouver, Kennewick and Seattle to which all women's organizations, educators, community and union leaders served on panels to survey the problems and needs of the women in that particular locality. These public meetings were most rewarding but in spite of good publicity both nationally and locally it was recognized that there is a great need for education with women's organizations, unions, and industry, as to the purpose and need of the Commission on the Status of Women. Local business, community and union leaders, as well as women's organizations, were interested and cooperative.

***Letter from Mildred Dunn, Chairman of the Governor's Commission on the Status of Women to Governor Rosellini dated December 31, 1963***  
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During these open public meetings we found attitudes, customs and practices which unjustly affect the employment status of women. Many employers still view women as temporary or part-time workers even though statistics prove that after marriage and child-rearing (at approximate age 30) women return to the labor force for an average of 23 years. The great need is for women as well as industry to accept the fact that they are in the labor force to stay (many as sole wage earners of the family) and to utilize their capabilities and talents as full time and permanent employees. At such meetings it was emphasized that women owe it to themselves as well as their nation to assume their full responsibility as citizens and to take active parts in the part of their choice.

At our first organization meeting on March 1, 1963, the words of Dr. Richard A. Lester, Vice Chairman of the President's Commission, "rely upon education, persuasion and guidance" were adopted as the methods of carrying on our work. We sincerely hope we have adhered to these words of wisdom.

We believe the members of the Legislature, other elected public officials, employers, and all citizens throughout the state should take a serious attitude towards the recommendations of our report. By providing the proper climate for women, the climate for all our citizens will be enhanced. We are as concerned as you are about equality for all not just equality for women.

On behalf of the commission, Mr. Governor, I am honored to hand you this unanimous report of our work during the last ten months.



# Governor Rosellini and the Commission 1964-65



STEPS TAKEN BY GOVERNOR ROSELLINI  
ON  
EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN  
1964-65

1. Establishment of a Governor's Commission on the Status of Women, February, 1963.
2. Executive Order forbidding any discrimination on the basis of race, religion, age or sex.
3. Reminded the Directors of the above Executive Order and directed their attention to the Status of Women Report recommendations urging steps be initiated in each department to assure equal opportunity for employment and advancement.
4. Directed that all positions for which "male only" or "female only" were requested to be cleared with the Department of Labor and Industries in order the state observe the same rules as is required of industry.
5. Urged the state apprentice program be more widely publicized and emphasis be placed on the fact these programs are open to women.
6. At the Governor's request, the Department of Personnel prepared statistical data from which factual determinations may be made as to whether there is discrimination against women by the state in classification, pay, hiring and promotion.
7. Has met with the Personnel Officers of the departments to ascertain what they see as problems needing administrative action.
8. Is continuing the Commission on the Status of Women to work on implementation of the recommendations.
9. Established an interdepartmental committee of representatives from Labor and Industries, Employment Security and the Personnel Board to study personnel standards required of industry and state government personnel standards with a view to bringing state policy in line with that which is required of industry.

**and that was the beginning.**

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